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## THE LOST WORLD

*Continued from page 9*

the ganglia ran down and the dreadful things were still.

SOME day, when I have a better desk than a meat tin, and more helpful tools than a worn stub of pencil and a last tattered notebook, I will write some fuller account of the Accala Indians, of our life among them, and of the glimpses we had of the strange conditions of wondrous Maple White Land. Memory, at least, will never fail me; for so long as the breath of life is in me every hour and every action of that period will stand out as hard and clear as do the first strange happenings of our childhood. No new impressions could efface those which are so deeply cut.

When the time comes, I will describe that wondrous moonlit night upon the great lake when a young ichthyosaurus—a strange creature, half seal, half fish, to look at, with bone-covered eyes on each side of his snout, and a third eye fixed upon the top of his head—was entangled in an Indian net, and nearly upset our canoe before we towed it ashore; the same night that a green water-shot shot out from the rushes and carried off in its coils the steersman of Challenger's canoe.

I will tell, too, of the great, nocturnal white thing—that to this day we do not know whether it was beast or reptile—which lived in a vile swamp to the east of the lake, and flitted about with a faint phosphorescent glimmer in the darkness. The Indians were so terrified of it that they would not go near the place; and, though we twice made expeditions and saw it each time, we could not make our way through the deep marsh in which it lived. I can only say that it seemed to be larger than a cow and had the strangest musky odor.

I will tell also of the huge bird which chased Challenger to the shelter of the rocks one day,—a great, running bird, far taller than an ostrich, with a vulturelike neck and cruel head which made it a walking death. As Challenger climbed to safety, one dart of that savage, curving beak shored off the heel of his boot as if it had been cut with a chisel. This time at least modern weapons prevailed, and the great creature, twelve feet from head to foot (*Phoracanthus* its name, according to our panting but exultant professor) went down before Lord Roxton's rifle in a flurry of waving feathers and kicking limbs, with two remorseless, yellow eyes glaring up from the midst of it. May I live to see that flattened, vicious skull in its own niche amid the trophies of the Albany!

Finally I will surely give some account of the toxodon, the giant, ten-foot guinea pig with projecting chisel teeth, which we killed as it drank in the gray of the morning by the side of the lake.

All this I will some day write at fuller length, and amid these more stirring days I would tenderly sketch in these lovely summer evenings when, with the deep-blue sky above us, we lay in good comradeship among the long grasses by the wood, and marveled at the strange fowl which swept over us and the quaint new creatures which crept from their burrows to watch us, while above us the boughs were heavy with luscious fruit and below us strange and lovely flowers peeped at us from among the herbage; or those long, moonlit nights when we lay out upon the shimmering surface of the great lake and watched with wonder and awe the huge circles rippling out from the sudden splash of some fantastic monster, or the greenish gleam far down in the deep water of some strange creature upon the confines of darkness. These are the scenes which my mind and my pen will dwell upon in every detail at some future day.

BUT, you will ask, why these experiences and why this delay when you and your comrades should have been occupied day and night in the devising of some means by which you could return to the outer world? My answer is that there was not one of us who was not working for this end, but that our work had been in vain. One fact we had very speedily discovered: The Indians would do nothing to help us. In every other way they were our friends, one might almost say our devoted slaves; but when it was suggested that they should help us to make and carry a plank which would bridge the chasm, or when we wished to get from them thongs of leather or ham to weave ropes which might help us, we were met by a good-humored, but an invincible, refusal. They would smile, twinkle their eyes, shake their heads, and there was the end of it. Even the old chief met us with the same obstinate denial, and it was only Maretus, the youngster, whom we had saved, who looked truly

fully at us and told us by his gestures that he was grieved for our thwarted wishes.

Ever since their crowning triumph with the Apemen they looked upon us as supermen who bore victory in the tubes of strange weapons, and they believed that so long as we remained with them good fortune would be theirs. A little red-skinned wife and a cave of our own were freely offered to each of us, if we would but forget our own people and dwell forever upon the plateau. So far all had been kindly; however far apart our desires might be; but we felt well assured that our actual plans of a descent must be kept secret, for we had reason to fear that at the last they might try to hold us by force.

In spite of the danger from dinosaurs (which is not great save at night; for, as I may have said before, they are mostly nocturnal in their habits), I have twice in the last three weeks been over to our old camp in order to see our negro, who still kept watch and ward below the cliff. My eyes strained eagerly across the great plain in the hope of seeing afar off the help for which we had prayed. But the long, cactus-strewn levels still stretched away, empty and bare, to the distant line of the canebrake.

"They will come soon now, Massa Malone. Before another week pass Indian come back and bring rope and fetch you down." Such was the cheery cry of our excellent Zambo.

I HAD one strange experience as I came from this second visit, which had involved my being away for a night from my companions. I was returning along the well remembered route, and had reached a spot within a mile or so of the marsh of the pterodactyls, when I saw an extraordinary object approaching me. It was a man who walked inside a framework made of bent canes so that he was inclosed on all sides in a bell-shaped cage. As I drew nearer I was amazed more still to see that it was Lord Roxton. When he saw me he slipped from under his curious protection and came toward me laughing, and yet, as I thought, with some confusion in his manner.

"Well, young fellah," said he, "who would have thought of meetin' you up here?"

"What in the world are you doing?" I asked.

"Visitin' my friends, the pterodactyls," said he.

"But why?"

"Interestin' beasts, don't you think? But unsociable! Nasty, rude ways with strangers, as you may remember. So I rigged this framework, which keeps them from bein' too pressin' in their attentions."

"But what do you want in the swamp?"

He looked at me with a very questioning eye, and I read hesitation in his face. "Don't you think other people besides professors can want to know things?" he said at last. "I'm studyin' the pretty dears. That's enough for you."

"No offense," said I.

His good humor returned, and he laughed. "No offense, young fellah. I'm goin' to get a young devil chick for Challenger. That's one of my jobs. No, I don't want your company. I'm safe in this cage, and you are not. So long, and I'll be back in camp by nightfall."

He turned away, and I left him wandering



Iguanodons in a Glade.

on through the wood with his extraordinary cage around him.

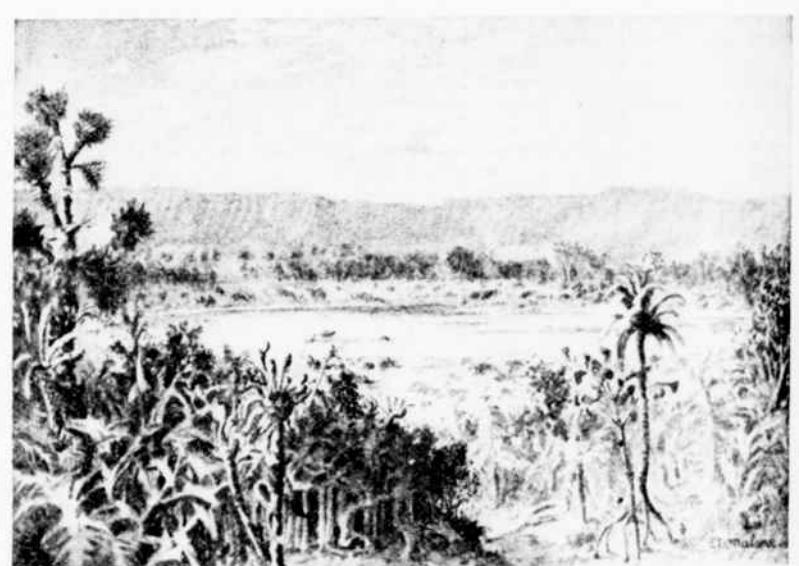
If Lord Roxton's behavior at this time was strange, that of Challenger was more so. I may say that he seemed to possess an extraordinary fascination for the Indian women, and that he always carried a large spreading palm branch with which he beat them off as if they were flies, when their attentions became too pressing. To see him walking, like a comic opera Sultan, with this badge of authority in his hand, his black beard bristling in front of him, his toes pointing at each step, and a train of wide-eyed Indian girls behind him, clad in their slender drapery of bark cloth, is one of the most grotesque of all the pictures I shall carry back with me.

As to Summerlee, he was absorbed in the insect and bird life of the plateau, and spent his whole time (save that considerable portion which was devoted to abusing Challenger for not getting us out of our difficulties in cleaning and mounting his specimens,

CHALLENGER had been in the habit of walking off by himself every morning and returning from time to time with looks of portentous solemnity, as one who bears the full weight of a great enterprise upon his shoulders. One day, palm branch in hand and his crowd of adoring devotees behind him, he led us down to his hidden workshop and took us into the secret of his plans.

The place was a small clearing in the center of a palm grove. In this was one of those boiling mud geysers I have already described. Around its edge were scattered a number of leather thongs cut from iguanodon hide, and a large collapsed membranous stomach of one of the great fish lizards from the lake. This huge sack had been sewed at one end and only a small orifice left at the other. Into this opening several bamboo canes had been inserted, and the other ends of these canes were in contact with conical clay funnels which collected the gas bubbling up through the mud of the geyser.

Soon the flaccid organ began slowly to expand and show such a tendency to upward movements that Challenger fastened the cords which held it to the trunks of the surrounding trees. In half an hour a good-sized gasbag had been formed, and the jerking and straining upon the thongs showed that it was capable of considerable lift. Challenger



The Big Swamp. Showing Pterodactyls.

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